

18. A process according to claim 15, wherein the medium of the hydrating step (a) contains less than 2% by weight of 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutyric acid.

19. A process according to claim 15, wherein the medium of the hydrating step (a) contains more than 95% by weight of 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutyramide.

20. A process according to claim 15, wherein the medium of the hydrating step (a) contains more than 98% by weight of 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutyramide.

21. A process according to claim 15, wherein the molar quantity of water to 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutyronitrile is between 1 and 2.5.

22. A process according to claim 15, wherein the hydrating step (a) is carried out at a temperature ranging between 0 to 50°C.

23. A process according to claim 15, wherein the hydrating step (a) is carried out at a pressure ranging between 0.01 and 1.0 bar.

24. A process according to claim 15, wherein during the hydrolyzing step (b) a sufficient quantity of water is added in order to maintain the reaction mass in a homogeneous form.

26. A process according to claim 15, wherein the hydrolyzing step (b) is carried out at temperature ranging between 90 and 130°C.

27. A process according to claim 15, wherein the hydrolyzing step (b) is carried out at pressure ranging between 0.5 and 5 bar.

FINNEGAN
HENDERSON
FARABOW
GARRETT &
DUNNER LLP

1300 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202.408.4000
Fax 202.408.4400
www.finnegan.com